The Janesville Gazette

YO R CONTACTS
Loc News Editor Teryl Franklin, (608) 754-3311, Ext. 293
Sunday Editor Greg Peck, (608) 754-3311, Ext. 278

Local/Area

Section B

Obituaries/2B
State news/3B
Squirrel hunting/6B

The Janesville Gazette, Sunday, September 29, 1996 1B

Teen's search for truth in JFK assassination leads to authorship

Schoonover
He wrote the book 'JFK: Exposing the Coverup.'

By Marcia Nelesen
Gazette Staff

Cal Schoonover carefully positioned himself on the hill above the Dallas street where John F. Kennedy was killed in 1963.

It was the exact spot where Abraham Zapruder filmed his now-famous amateur video of the presidential motorcade and the subsequent assassination.

Cal visited the spot 31 years after that day. But, in his mind, he could see the president's car turn onto Elm Street—the dark head smiling and nodding, his hand waving to the crowd.

In his mind, Cal could hear six sharp shots from the Texas School Book Depository, a nearby grassy knoll, the Dal-Text building.

Cal could see the president grab his throat, and Jacqueline Kennedy, dressed in pink, lean over her husband in concern. The sixth and fatal bullet—this one fired from the grassy knoll from the front right—slams into Kennedy's skull, forcing his head back and to the left.

This is how the 16-year-old Janesville Craig High School student sees the assassination, one of the most devastating days in American history.

Theories still abound as to who shot Kennedy and why. Cal, 604 S. Main, offers his own version of events in a new book.

Cal was a fifth-grader at Roosevelt Elementary School studying our 35th president when he decided something wasn't quite right about the official theory.

Since then, Cal has pored over books and documents and has read the Warren Commission report, the government version of events that blames a sole gunman—Lee Harvey Oswald—who shot from the Texas School Book Depository.

During the last five years, Cal has visited the home of Jim Garrison, the New Orleans district attorney who was the focus of Oliver Stone's movie "JFK" in 1992. He requested Oswald's discharge papers from the Marine Corps and copies of Dallas police arrest records, citing the Freedom of Information Act and using up his free 100 pages of Xeroxed copies granted by the government.

Then, he wrote the book about his research.

It was the "magic bullet theory" that first inspired Cal's incredulity.

The Warren Commission found that three shots were fired. The first one reportedly missed, and the second hit Kennedy in the back and exited from his neck to strike Gov. John Connally, Cal said. A third hit Kennedy in the back of his head.

Cal, a hunter, has been around guns all his life.

"Supposedly, (one bullet) enters the president's back at a downward angle, then it moves up and exits the front of the neck, then turns right, then left and enters Gov. John Connally's back and goes through his chest, breaking his fifth rib, where it exits, then turns right again and re-enters the governor again at his right wrist, where it shatters bone.

"Then, the bullet exits his wrist, makes a com-

Turn to AUTHOR/5B

Continued from 1B

plete 'U-turn' and goes into the governor's left thigh."

The bullet later was found on a Dallas stretcher in almost pristine condition, Cal said.

"I just didn't buy it," he added. "It stayed in my head."

He also didn't believe that the bolt-action World War II Italian rifle that the government says Lee Harvey Oswald used was capable of firing that many shots in six seconds with that much accuracy.

And he didn't believe that Oswald, rated as merely a marksman, had the skill required. In later tests, more than 100 marksmen tried to re-create Oswald's performance and couldn't, Cal said. Neither could 50 sharp shooters, who are even more skilled.

Oliver Stone's movie in 1992 really got Cal going.

In eighth grade, he talked his mom, Cheryle, into taking him to Dallas, New Orleans and Washington, D.C., where he visited spots integral to the mystery.

"I wanted to get my own view, to get a feel for it," he said.

An eerie feeling washed over him as he surveyed Dealey Plaza in Dallas.

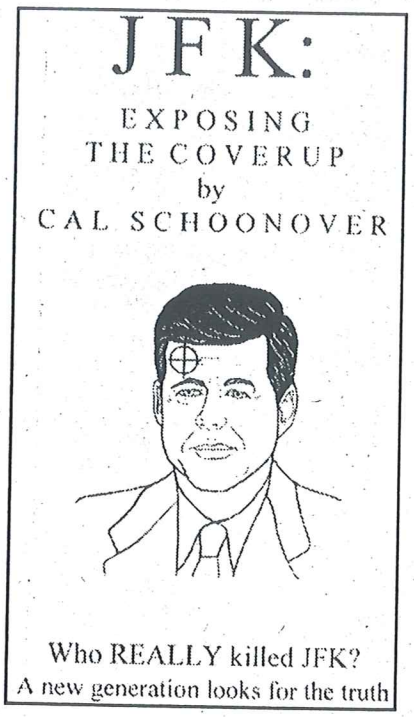
"I stood there trying to imagine. As soon as his (Kennedy's) car got on Elm Street, they were shooting at him right away. I could just hear it."

Cal's book is titled, "JFK: Exposing the Cover-Up ... A New Generation Looks for the Truth."

In it, he thanks his mom, seventh-grade teacher Stefanie Murray, "my friend Charlie and my Grammy for giving up their time to sit and listen to what I had to say. Even though they got sick and tired of listening to me talk about Kennedy, they never changed the subject, they just sat and listened. Thank you."

He hopes the book, which he says didn't come to any new conclusions but is only his opinion of plausibilities, helps keep the controversy alive.

"Since I am not a district attorney or some kind of political person, this is the only way I feel like I can do anything about the assassination of an American president.... Generations pass by, and fewer and fewer people care about what happened on Nov. 22, 1963. I care, and I hope others in my generation care."



Charles Brown, Cal's neighbor, helped type the manuscript, which reads like an autobiographical term paper. The soft cover is available at Book World for $6.95.

"I think it's great for somebody so young to be interested in the politics, in history and in the pursuit of the truth," said Brown, lauding Cal's perseverance.

Cal keeps on researching, motivated when he thinks that he might be the one to stumble upon the piece of the puzzle that everyone else has missed.

Cal believes rogue elements of the CIA were responsible for Kennedy's death. The president had threatened to dismantle the agency. Kennedy's plan to withdraw from Vietnam also could have come into play.

Cal has great respect for Kennedy and his wife, and he gets angry with what he claims was a cover-up.

"What right does the government have to seal the Kennedy files? Why can't regular people like you and me walk into the Federal Archives and see the real X-rays, the real autopsy notes and the real files on Oswald?

"National security is a lame excuse," Cal added. "If people wouldn't take the government's word for everything and, instead, would demand to see the real evidence, we might have a better country to live in."